



UWS Academic Portal

Life in a forgotten Scottish gulag

Holligan, Christopher

Published in:
Journal of Historical Sociology

DOI:
[10.1111/johs.12170](https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12170)

Published: 01/06/2018

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication on the UWS Academic Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Holligan, C. (2018). Life in a forgotten Scottish gulag: punishment and social regulation in HM Peterhead Convict Prison. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 31(2), 165-181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12170>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the UWS Academic Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact pure@uws.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LIFE IN A FORGOTTEN SCOTTISH GULAG

PUNISHMENT AND SOCIAL REGULATION IN HM PETERHEAD CONVICT PRISON

“My world is very small and monotonous” ¹

ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to filling a lacuna in our knowledge of penal history in Scotland by examining the voices of convicts through records of prisoners experiencing Penal Servitude during the period 1897-1942. The sources utilized are the archived files of thirty-two male convict prisoners in Scotland’s Convict Prison at Peterhead. These files give insights about life in this remote prison as conveyed through records of punishment, prisoners’ requests, and prisoners’ letters. Prison Rules about convict correspondence highlight penal letters as a distinctive genre of communication: political and personal boundaries were enforced on all exchanges. The convict prison, like nineteenth-century British labour colonies, imposed workhouse conditions at the extreme; it was a place of exclusion, dominated by religious and social sentiment and suppositions about criminal psychology and containment. The extent of the curtailment of convicts’ liberty and the aim of re-socialization is refracted in penal practices fostering convict dependency. The ethos of Scotland’s convict colony was immersed in military traditions of training, subservience to authority and generalized gloom.

BACKGROUND

The research contribution of the current study is to the historiography of the convict prison in Scotland which coincides with the emergence of the modern prison as a deterrent regime. ² The risk management of inmates incarcerated in modern UK prisons illustrates continuity with the attitudes of prison officials to convicts’ requests, letters and punishments in the period 1889-1942. ³ Prisons became the main punishment imposed by courts from 1830. ⁴ Convict prisons in England, such as Portland and Dartmoor, both opened in the mid-nineteenth century, are comparable to Peterhead in many respects: Dartmoor, in particular, imposed harsh conditions, severe punishments, and exhausting physical labour. ⁵ Prescriptive rules about written correspondence, frequently the only contact prisoners had with family, were common across convict prisons. ⁶ Edward Royle notes that through the nineteenth century and beyond only the wealthy could afford train or road travel for any distance; ⁷ it is unsurprising that convicts at Peterhead, in the remote north-east of Scotland, had few visitors. Peterhead was designed to be a public works prison where convict labour was deployed in the service of the British state. It specialized in the confinement of male prisoners sentenced to penal servitude for serious aggravated or violent crimes with minimum detention periods of five years until 1891, and

thereafter three years.⁸ The primary sources underpinning this paper are mainly from the HH15 series held by National Records of Scotland (NRS), which contains a total of thirty-two files, each relating to a male convict serving a sentence that included hard labour for, typically, violent crimes involving murder and culpable homicide. Peterhead was the only Convict Prison in Scotland. It closed in 2013 and is now a penal heritage museum.

Following the Penal Servitude Act of 1853 convict labour was no longer used overseas in convict colonies, where increasing costs and loss of intimidatory impact had reduced its efficacy⁹, but was instead directed to public works in Britain where the convicts' toil defrayed the cost of imprisonment.¹⁰ Historians classify as "effort-intensive work" the labour undertaken by convicts as it was "susceptible to being driven through fear of pain".¹¹ Convicts who previously would have been transported to British colonies overseas were sentenced to 'penal servitude' that involved hard labour and solitary confinement; penal servitude was "a milder punishment than transportation, but was more severe than imprisonment"; productive convict labour was a principle guiding prison administration throughout the nineteenth century.¹²

The convicts at Peterhead worked on the construction of a sea barrier, known as a 'harbour of breakwater', designed to protect shipping. One hundred convicts were also transferred in the early 1920s, on a temporary basis, from England to Peterhead to work on the construction of a sea plane station.¹³ The convict colonies around the British mainland, and overseas in Gibraltar, that built harbours to protect shipping on behalf of the Admiralty imposed an especially arduous type of hard labour. Prison files record regular injuries that required medical treatment for facial and lower-limb damage: William Galbraith, for example, convicted of culpable homicide in 1897, experienced head wounds and wrist injuries when forging iron and using the sledge hammer.¹⁴ The physical routine of breaking stone in the Peterhead quarries, and transporting it by wheelbarrow to train carriages to be moved to the breakwater, also served the universal penal goal of preventing escape, as hard labour kept convicts busy and exhausted, reducing the energy available for escape attempts; the few who did escape were recaptured within hours or days.

Attempts to re-model the lives of the marginalized mingled with the deterrent and retributive purposes of punishment, as illuminated by the argument that historically the British penal system "is organized relative to industrial manufacturing and the ideal of the social and moral value of sustained labour".¹⁵ Dobash's Marxist analysis of the history of penal labour and its relationship to discipline foregrounds class exploitation through this penal order. Foucault viewed the emergence of disciplinary punishment as connected with capitalist organization of labour power.¹⁶ Exploitation under penal conditions provokes resistance, so harsh punishment was used to enforce hard labour. Scottish Prison Commissioner Colonel A. B. McHardy championed the pursuit of disciplinary and deterrent goals, supporting flogging with the 'cat'

for wilful refusal to work and handcuffs for retraining prisoners judged to be unruly.¹⁷ James Devon, in his scientific reflections on experiences as Medical Officer of H.M. Prison at Glasgow, emphasized “strict supervision” of prisoners, believing its absence “may result in general corruption”.¹⁸

Corruption and informal physical punishments were alleged to characterize the culture of convict prison warders and indifferent governors.¹⁹ Devon, writing in 1912, commended the ‘Silent System’, one of the reforms suggested by John Howard in 1777 in his *The State of the Prisons* report aimed at enforcing reform of the criminal self through inward reflection, but Devon took the view that solitary confinement drives some to insanity, recognizing that “delusions of suspicion and of persecution” may be caused by prison custody; nevertheless, solitary confinement was retained as a punishment for several subsequent decades.²⁰ Enlightened observers, such as Alexis de Tocqueville who commented during his 1835 tour of American prisons that democracy is characterized by intolerance towards ‘deviants’, noted an incongruity between democracy and analyses of how the poor should be reformed and punished that perhaps reflected a fear of a more general contagion of moral degeneracy, described by Daniel Pick writing on notions of degeneration in Victorian Europe.^{21 22}

Protestant idealists conceived the prison as offering an opportunity to reform souls. Michael Ignatieff’s concept of “a just measure of pain” contextualizes how the penitentiary imposed itself upon convicts, reflecting wider doctrines about reforming ‘deviants’.²³ A widely-held view of criminals at the end of the nineteenth century was that of moral degenerates of working-class origin. Their reformation through hard work was aimed at fitting them for social inclusion, as law abiding workers, in the new centralized industrial order that developed during the late Victorian period where the social prescription of clock time also extended into workers’ use of their free time.^{24 25} Psychiatric patients in Edinburgh Asylum during this period were also subjected to the belief of the therapeutic benefits of hard physical work and regimented days: “Discipline, order, a life under medical rule” demanded the famous alienist and asylum superintendent, Thomas Clouston.²⁶ Penal regimes included physical punishment, and physical brutality was a common complaint of Asylum patients against the attendants, along with harsh care through disciplined exercise and feeding regimes, over which inmates, convict or patient, had no authority or recompense.

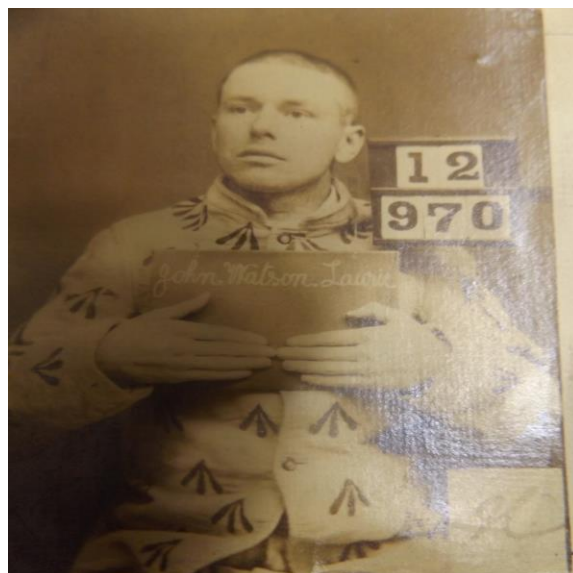
In the Scottish tradition prison is a place of punishment.²⁷ The prison system in its current form dates from 1878 when the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1877 came into force and central government took over responsibility through a Prison Commission.²⁸ Spencer describes how security was arguably intensified following the 1877 Act: Inspector Reports were no longer made public and a “more centralized and secretive bureaucracy” developed.²⁹ Gresham Sykes’ conception of modern penal power, framed in terms of five pains of imprisonment, identifies deprivations of

liberty, of goods and services, of heterosexual relationships, of autonomy and of security.³⁰ Each of these pains is apparent in the convict regime, the workings of which also imposed suffering beyond these general categories. The bureaucracy of the “Marks System” at Peterhead derived from the meticulous attention to detail and puritanical sensibility of an early prison reformer, Maconochie, who in 1840 advocated that a convict’s quality of work and behaviour should impact on sentence duration.³¹ Although leading reformers within the prison system of Scotland and England believed humane treatment combined with relaxed rules and improved physical conditions could change prisoners for the better, until the 1920s and beyond prison regulations and discipline remained severe.^{32 33} By 1892 a penal-like controlling mentality existed outside prisons, with working-class life-styles being viewed with opprobrium.³⁴ Soares describes the punitive and reformatory regimes imposed upon female inebriates during the period 1876-1898 in institutions distant from the perceived contamination of their home environments. Punishment included physical chastisement, the ‘black hole’ (solitary confinement), and deprivation of privileges, including food, demonstrating just how far these women were coerced.³⁵

PETERHEAD CONVICT COLONY

The men who found themselves incarcerated in the convict colony facing out to the cold waters of the North Sea where they spent their days up to their knees in water building the massive breakwater wall generally started their sentences young and fit. Figure 1 shows John Watson Lawrie, photographed on his reception at Peterhead in 1889, wearing convict prisoner uniform and displaying his prisoner identity number, his hands on full view in the regulation pose to aid unique identification.

Figure 1: Convict John Watson Lawrie ©National Records of Scotland



Most Peterhead convicts were born and committed their crimes in west central Scotland. The occupations of the 32 whose files are now held by the NRS included hole borer, ships cook, labourer, shoemaker, miner, blacksmith, soldier and stonebreaker; twenty-two were Protestants, eight Catholics, two Jewish. In 1888 there were 114 convicts in Peterhead, and by 1893 its population rose to 330.³⁶ Concern was expressed in Parliament about the sufficiency of numbers to build the breakwater barrier, but labour on public works was also designed to foster criminals' successful re-entry into the community, as employment was judged to encourage habits of industry and self-reliance, and to develop skills (Parliamentary Papers 1878: 7). The prison authorities attended to the circumstances facing prisoners on the outside when adjudicating about early release or eventual liberation. Warders were armed, however, and advised convicts on reception into Peterhead that they would be shot or attacked with bladed military weapons if they attempted to escape or assaulted staff, so reforming convicts into members of a disciplined workforce involved menace. Naval cutlasses and military rifles were carried by warders at Peterhead until 1959³⁷ just as warders supervising out-door labour in English convict prisons Millbank and Dartmoor carried rifles and bayonets.³⁸

On entering the convict settlement at Peterhead after the long journey from Glasgow accompanied by guards the prisoners would have been unaware of the ideals exemplified within penal policies and underpinning the training of the warders. Their photographic images, taken on Reception at the prison, suggest their expectations varied; some appear apprehensive and afraid, others unconcerned and tough. In the social world they had left behind, unemployment led to homelessness, as volatile overseas markets contributed to cyclical unemployment among a largely unskilled or semi-skilled workforce facing unregulated competition from migratory Irish and Highland labour. The convicts' facial scars and other "marks" on their person recorded in their prison files suggest they had been active participants seeking, through their own agency, personal security. Once inside Peterhead all social contact with the outside was very closely regulated.

Time, and its structure of space and purposeful activity underpinned patterns of weekly life in Peterhead. Prisoners were woken by a bell at 5.30am, breakfasted in their cells, then at 7am the cell doors were opened and prisoners paraded in military ranks and were searched in the prison yard, before proceeding by prison train two miles to the granite quarries where they hewed out stone, using hammers and chisels, which was then moved by prison trains to the breakwater barrier construction site.³⁹ The Prison Act of 1865 had sought to implement state retribution and convey fear of law-breaking by making prisons places for hard labour, hard fare and a hard bed.⁴⁰ Devon, the renowned Scottish prison medical officer, conceptualized life as a convict in this period as follows:

“His life has been arranged for him, and he might as well run his head against the wall as refuse to obey. Everything is done with regularity and quietness, and the monotony of it all oppresses him. His inclinations are not consulted; his anger not regarded, except it transgress the rules.”⁴¹

Moderated methods of developing discipline through structures of physical segregation informed the way the prison system operated. Social interchange between convicts within the prison was judged to lead to ‘contamination’ and for this reason the Silent System was instituted, barring convicts from speaking to each other. The Annual Report of the Commissioners in 1889 stated that “conversation, beyond what is absolutely necessary, is prohibited.” Ingenuous convicts developed ways of speaking in “a ventriloquous kind of manner” making it difficult for warders to identify the speaker.⁴² Solitary confinement was used to punish convicts; in 1914, for example, seventy-five convicts each spent six days in solitary.⁴³ Foucault argues judicial punishment involves minute technologies and surveillance designed to alter the minds and bodies of the laboring poor.⁴⁴ In Peterhead the G-Bed, a wooden base and pillow that guaranteed sleep deprivation, was a common punishment, convicts receiving one to four nights for more serious offences in prison. In 1914, the G-Bed was used seven-hundred and four times.

SOCIAL VALUES AND REGULATING THE POOR

Tobias describes the relation between crime and industrial society in the nineteenth century, suggesting urban dwellers “were jerked out of centuries of certainty into an uncertain world”.⁴⁵ Reforming idealists, inspired by religious or political values, sought to ameliorate conditions of life outside prisons. These innovations shared disciplinary aspects with the mentality of convict prison settlement, as well as the aspiration to reduce contributory factors to criminality. A combination of welfare and punitive policies meant large groups of poor people were relocated from cities to the countryside to undertake agricultural labour where their keep was provided. Based on transforming life conditions it was reckoned new identities and positive futures would be forged. This policy of re-location is associated with Calvinism, and the capitalist underpinnings of the benefits of hard or other physical labour to moral reformation in its historical emergence in Scotland and England from the sixteenth century into the mid-twentieth century.⁴⁶

Historians describe the antecedents to what emerged in Scotland, as social values embraced a prescriptive regulation of human behaviour throughout early modern Europe: Kavorkian, for instance, describes the period 1700-1730 as exemplifying ties between care of the poor, punishment, and religious strictures. The Reformation political agenda entailed discipline and care. The poor, through subjection to regimes of discipline, were to be educated into understanding and respecting their place in the social order; work was given a critical role in fostering cohesion.^{47 48} Elizabeth Fry, the philanthropic Quaker, believed humiliation of spirit was a necessary step to reformation of prisoners in 1816 and Robert Owen, crusading in the same

year, believed that people's character had to be formed for them through management of their education and environment.⁴⁹

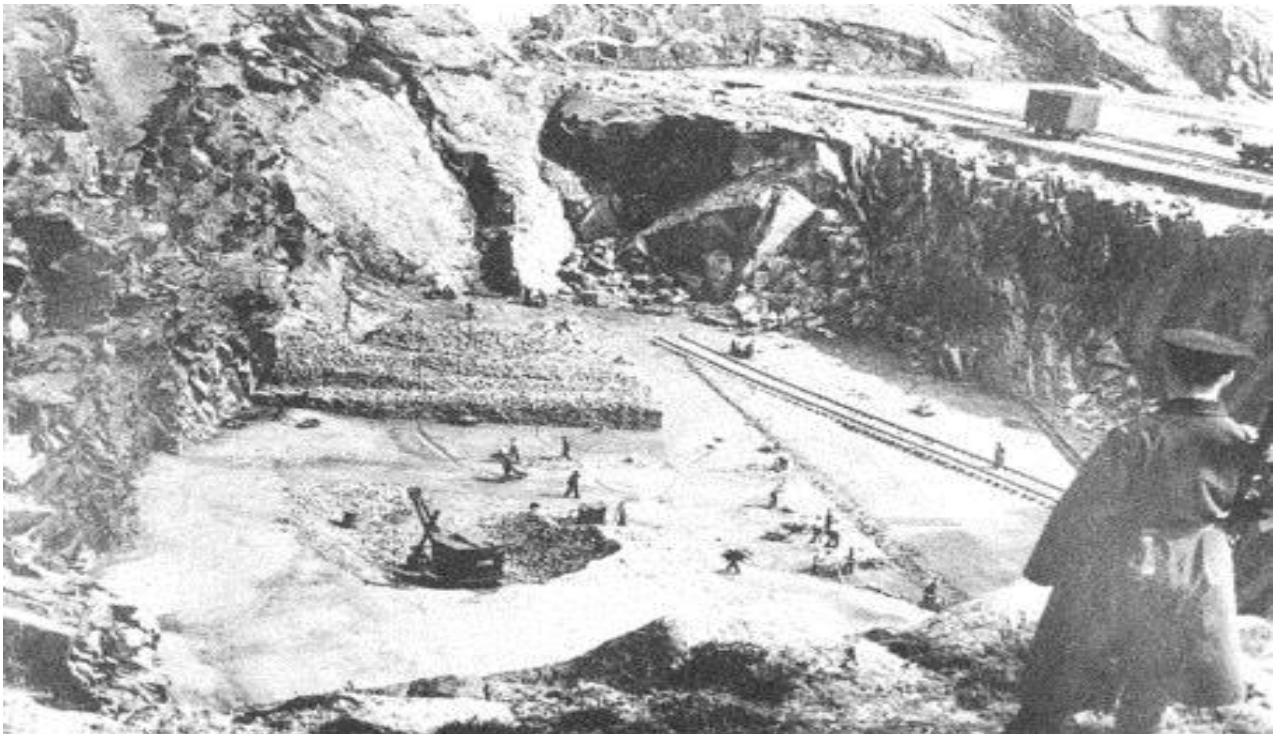
Johnston's account of Scotland's first labour colony in Clydeside between 1890 and 1914 describes rapid capitalist development and intense urbanization.⁵⁰ Johnston argues "one of the prime functions of the first civilian labour colony was to maintain the work ethic and prevent able-bodied men, judged, unlike women and children, as individuals responsible for their own welfare, from slipping into pauperism". This outlook refracted a grand scheme to establish compulsory labour colonies for Clydeside's 'undesirables'. The hardening of attitudes Johnston identified towards the urban poor ran in parallel with an "enlightened municipalisation movement", and compassion.⁵¹ Rusche, from a Marxist perspective, conceptualizes punishments in terms of reforming through dispositional change in convict workers; adaptation to the workplace on liberation is the goal, a theme surfacing in the penal files, especially when sentence remission was under consideration.⁵²

Colonel McHardy's para-military background, with its underpinning disciplinary codes, was common among elite administrators of the Scottish prison system, then and today. Prison governors gained distinction serving in the Armed Forces. McHardy regarded as "near mutiny" the refusal of convicts to work in the company of other convicts, although he allowed convicts to have access to reading matter and personal possessions.⁵³ He believed flawed moral traits were sources of criminality and had to be remediated through industry: the work ethic of self-reliance was to be inculcated as a habit to reform flawed characters. McHardy strongly supported the system of separate cells, but had doubts about associated labour where convicts worked in teams, and fought against the encroachment into the prison system's punitive focus of a more caring medically-based hospital treatment service, fearing this might weaken discipline, provoke malingering and dilute the authority of prison warders and governors.⁵⁴ In 1905 McHardy denied convict Robert Smith⁵⁵ the addresses of Smith's children who were endeavouring to contact their father, remarking simply "it is not desirable to give him their addresses". Robert Smith spent fifteen years in Penal Servitude from 1893 before transfer to Perth asylum, where the medical officer commented in 1913 "this man is a type of dangerous lunatic unfit for treatment in an ordinary asylum...he must be kept in Perth indefinitely", and where he died in 1937 without ever seeing his children.

Creating an atmosphere of general gloom was deemed rehabilitative and necessary from the sixteenth through to the twentieth centuries: it was judged to compel introspection and sense of guilt, fostering psychological conditions for convicts to change their mentality away from criminogenic reasoning.⁵⁶ The Separate System of cells and the Silent System of no talking, besides interfering with the pleasures of social communion, were part of the material conditions behind the austere Protestant, religious, ideologically-inspired rehabilitative vision,

where prison is a place for suffering, especially in terms of its focus upon the bodies of prisoners. Through its various regimes such as Hard Labour, suffering is inflicted, as Foucault recognized, on the body of the convict.⁵⁷ Dobash argues Protestant ideology and capitalism combined to discipline the convicts as they were subjected to taxing outdoor physical work, where discipline, punishment, training, and production are crystallized in the labour process.⁵⁸ Hard labour was built into penal philosophy: labour on 'public' works such as dredging the Thames or building a harbour or breakwater at Peterhead justified, in the eyes of the authorities, expenditure from the public purse. Figure 2 below shows convicts at work in the quarry overseen by an armed guard situated on the heights who was authorized to incapacitate escapees.

Figure 2: Convicts undertaking 'Hard Labour'



"Prisoners from Peterhead at work in Stirlinghill Quarry: the picture shows an officer patrolling, rifle at the ready as prisoners work in a quarry near Peterhead. It was taken in 1959 and is one of the first times a press photographer had been allowed access to the prison." ©Aberdeen Journals Ltd .

PENAL SOCIALISATION

Once arrested prisoners would anticipate being confined and dependent on the goodwill of fellow convicts and guards as to whether assault or secondary punishments would occur. Violence between prisoners and assault of guards was a regular feature of prison conditions. They were entering a secret world and would live in intimate proximity to others with questionable mental health and violent criminal propensities. They would learn how to behave

from talking with others, overhearing disturbing conversations.⁵⁹ Adjusting to this future life in an intimidating new society would take time, and require of them willingness to submit to the authority of the guards, and their borrowed psychiatric diagnostic. Convicts would learn about the suicide of other inmates and the disappearance of others who lost their sanity and transferred to the Criminal Lunatic Department, Perth Prison.

Under the British Prisons Act of 1877 prisons were administered by the Secretary of State and designed to be places of punishment symbolic of the state's determination to deter crime. The Penal Servitude Act introduced the Progressive Stage System: a convict's sentence was split into stages, each carrying increasing privileges, or in the case of non-compliance, the removal of privileges, and imposition of punishments. In 1911 Devon described the distinctive severity of punishment in the convict prison:

“The routine treatment to which the convict is subjected is much more severe than that which is applied to the ordinary prisoner, and it does as little good. It is a system of repression mainly; a sitting on the safety-value that is apt to provoke outburst of temper and violence resulting in assault. These may be punished by the lash. A power which is not possessed by the Judges of the High Court is granted to the Prison Commissioners. It is considered necessary in order to maintain the system, but no one claims that the system is in any way reformatory”.⁶⁰

Offences such as assaulting an officer merited G-Bed punishment for between seven and fourteen days. Punishment through diet reductions was also common. Those attempting to escape were subject to more severe physical punishments such as the birch, leg irons and the ‘cat o’ nine tails’, a cloth covered wooden handle almost twenty inches long with nine lashes of whipcord, each one eighth of an inch thick and thirty-three inches long. Cameron identified little sympathy from the public about prisoners and their conditions.⁶¹ The convicts had different punishments depending upon offending and how they were perceived as prisoners by officers, although for the most common and frequent offences - idleness, insolence, talking – punishments were uniform across the convicts: reduced diet, points deducted, or probation. The Silent System was often disrespected by convicts, evidenced by the frequency of punishments for talking with other convicts

John Watson Lawrie (Figure 1) was not unusual in the transition he made from Peterhead to Perth's Criminal Lunatic Department, and his treatment typified the application of psychological science. He was born in Glasgow and sentenced to death by hanging at the age of twenty-five for the ‘Arran Murder’ in 1889. His sentence was commuted to Penal Servitude for Life, and he remained incarcerated until his death in the Criminal Lunatic Department at Perth Prison in 1930. Forfeiture of marks, flogging and living in chains was part of this regime.⁶² For attempting to escape Lawrie was “Flogged with Birch Rod – 30 strokes in addition to other punishments, probation, partly-coloured dress and leg irons for 6 months.”⁶³ He complained to the Governor in 1905 that “regardless of my deplorable physical condition I am sent to the exposure of the

quarries. Trusting you will disapprove of such proceedings” and to the Scottish Prison Commissioners he wrote “Gentleman, the Governor whose diabolical practices are by no mean unknown to you has thought fit to remove the educational book which I was allowed to retain. I ask that it be supplemented by the shorthand dictionary and returned.” His removal to Perth prison’s Criminal Lunatic Department followed a report by the prison medical officer:

“The facts: this convict has erotic sexual instincts, has delusions of suspicion, and has during the last two years shown other symptoms of progressing mental enfeeblement. In my opinion insane and fit for removal to and treatment in the Lunatic Department of Perth prison.”

His diagnosis exhibited a conception of sexual desire as unnatural - in this context bodies with sexual desire were deemed pathological. Lawrie’s requests for liberation were rejected despite exemplary behaviour in Perth. Following his eventual death, the procurator fiscal noted that no post mortem was desired; the sources do not reveal on what basis this decision was taken. The secrecy and isolation of prison that attracted Foucault’s focus resonates with the denial of publicity about Lawrie’s death and avoidance of a post-mortem.

Prison Rules severely constrained the autonomy of convicts. Offences leading to probation tariffs and forfeiture of points included “exchanging his library books with another prisoner”, “insolence to an officer and using filthy language when spoken to”, “talking to another prisoner on parade and insolence to an officer when spoken to about it”. On the other hand, if penal authority was respected convicts’ sentences could be remitted: in 1920 the War Office wrote to the Prison Governor stating that remission “depends entirely upon an improvement in their conduct whilst under sentence and that they will under no circumstances be released unless their conduct improves”. Mercy and empathic support coloured some convicts’ experiences. James Garden, for example, had been sentenced to fifteen years Penal Servitude for “Joining in a Mutiny” in France and the Prison Commission arranged for his relatives to visit him in Glasgow, before he was conveyed to Peterhead.⁶⁴ Another convict, James MacMillan, convicted of Desertion in 1915 at the age of twenty-two, was permitted to transfer his photographs, books and letters with him to Peterhead.⁶⁵ James Tinsley, sentenced to fifteen years Penal Servitude for negligently causing the deaths of several persons in 1915, was permitted, under escort, to travel to visit his dying father in Yorkshire and wear his “private clothes” all at the prison’s expense.⁶⁶ So a humanitarian empathy co-existed with preparedness to punish severely. Michael James Murphy, sentenced to Penal Servitude for ten years for Mutiny in 1916, experienced the force of authority two years later following his assault on a prison guard, abusive language and refusal to work. He was punished by 14 nights G-Bed and solitary confinement. Three years later he was “placed in handcuffs as he had barricaded himself in cell” and later in his sentence he was forcibly fed on successive mornings.⁶⁷

Diagnostic judgement took its own tyrannical form, putting some on the trajectory of permanent incarceration. Thomas Bone was convicted in 1908 for murder at the age of twenty-eight.⁶⁸ Prison officers' comments later into his sentence included: "symptoms of insanity for a long time", "Bone is a most troublesome subject and no reliance can be placed on his statements". He was judged to be "a debased creature", removed to the "Strong Cell", had "body belt restraint and handcuffs behind, canvas clothing and Silent Cell". One warder in 1908 remarked: "He is an idle dangerous fellow who requires firm handling and would be the better of the cat." While in the Criminal Lunatic Department in 1911, following transfer from Peterhead, the medical officer described his mental condition in these terms: "Though he still is and always no doubt will be what his early training and choices of circumstances made him morally and temperamentally, even in that respect he may be said to have at least more control over their manifestations than formally..." coupled with a declaration that "discipline and good common decency must be maintained". Convicts who presented differently to the guards and authorities found they were treated mercifully: William Drummond Dick, aged thirty-one, was sentenced to Penal Servitude for five years in 1914 for the offence of Trading with the Enemy.⁶⁹ His offending in custody is typical of the common breaches of the Prison Rules: "persisting in talking", idleness in workshop" and "disobedience and insolence". However, an officer involved with his case argued his sentence was too severe and he was liberated after serving just one year.

This convict labour force faced the authorities with their different personalities and transgressions. As a group of distinctive young men with a wide range of life histories they varied greatly amongst themselves and, not surprisingly, experienced confinement as more, or less painful. Their epistolary behaviour reflected this individuality, some rarely corresponding at all while others kept invigorated a reciprocated network over many years.

CONVICTS' LETTERS: AN AMBIGUOUS LIBERTY

The opportunity for convicts to send and receive written correspondence was an ambiguous liberty: letters offered a degree of free expression to convicts and the opportunity to retain aspects of the relationships that the complex dimensions of family and social ties embrace. On the other hand, they were reminders of the distance that incarceration imposed on their liberty to be with those outside and communicate with them as they wish. Letters constituted, for almost all convicts, their only social contact outside the prison, a situation that was not unlike that of Asylum patients, and, like letters from asylums, the authorities retained in the files any letters in either direction that were critical of the institution, so they never reached their intended recipients.⁷⁰ A few had visits, but these were rare and infrequent. The distance from the congested criminogenic areas in Scotland, where most of the convicts had lived prior to

incarceration, and whose families were typically living in poverty, accounts for the infrequency of the visits.

Lewis Klink, a Russian Jew from Riga, made several petitions to the Secretary for Scotland to be moved south from Peterhead so that he could receive visits.⁷¹ His sister Bertha in 1909 petitioned King Edward for mercy in the light of his young age at the time of his crime and the length of sentence. In documents relating to a petition to the Secretary for Scotland in 1906 asking that Klink be allowed to write to his friends in the Jewish language, S.A. Dodd, the n Governor of Peterhead, explained his objection to the Secretary as follows:

“...With regard to his letters – He writes English fluently and his friends are apparently able to get them translated...It is true in certain cases convicts have, by special permission of the Prison Commission been allowed to write to their friends in their own language, but these were convicts who could not write English themselves. It is clearly undesirable that convicts should correspond with their friends in a language which is not understood.”

Letters, as this case illustrates and the extent of his correspondence suggests (see Table 1), offered a life-line. Some years into his sentence Klink was moved to the Criminal Lunatic Department at Perth Prison, as he thought he was being poisoned and gassed by the authorities and that this could take place because there was no outsider visiting him who could act on his behalf. His diagnosis of insanity related to these supposed delusions about his experiences, but after treatment he was deemed to be recovered sufficiently to be returned to Peterhead, and after further petitioning, was transferred to Brixton prison and then deported back to Latvia in 1921.

We should not be surprised by the rich epistolary life some convicts were able to sustain: literacy rates were higher among Scottish male convicts than among their English and Irish counterparts, with 65% of Scottish inmates able to both read and write as early as 1840.⁷² Dobson comments “for those who are physically separated from close ones, the act of letter-writing can provide a medium for reconciling past and present and fashioning a workable sense of self.”⁷³ On the other hand, given the constraints of Prison Rules about letter content, which was carefully monitored, letters that did pass censorship may convey a false picture of personal coping, anxieties, fears and prison life. Dobson’s analysis neglects official circumspection about communication by convicts with the outside or access to them by family or other supporters, which was tightly monitored. Morton describes how Scots migrants during 1832-1914 relied upon letters “to maintain their bond with home”.⁷⁴ Donnachie found in his study of Scottish criminals and their transportation to Australia between 1786 and 1852 that letters are not mentioned; convicts from Scotland during that period appeared to have been denied letter correspondence altogether.⁷⁵

Morton writes that for some Scottish migrants 'home' was maintained in the "communications and movements of family and friends", arguing this confirmed the importance of the postal system for Scotland's diaspora.⁷⁶ For Peterhead's convicts, an enforced internal national diaspora, a concept of home may have progressively become, with the passage of time, a partial fantasy: a convict's life was frozen in time, existing as an exclusive micro-society severed from the outside. In the ideological origins of the penitentiary, discipline without chains "habituated the mind to order."⁷⁷ English convict memoirs describe monitoring: letters had to be earned as a privilege, convicts were obliged to use prison letter paper containing their name and number, and write within the lines; the letter sheet stated rules their outside correspondents must obey.⁷⁸ The French colonial convict archive records the pursuit of the same type of restrictions and surveillance of prisoners' letters.⁷⁹ At Peterhead throughout the period 1897-1942, convicts' relatives were presented with a 'Notice Concerning Communication with Prisoners' which stated:

"All letters are read by the Authorities, who may keep if they think it right to do so. Every letter will be kept back in the following cases:

1. If it is crossed, or otherwise not written in plain to be easily read.
2. If it contains indecorous or improper matter.
3. If it contains Public News, or anything beyond domestic or personal matters.
4. If it is longer than four pages of note paper, or two pages of letter paper of this size.

No unpaid letters will be received at the Prison. Each letter must have on the back the current number of the prisoner, as well as the name."

Letters from prisoners deemed critical of the prison in any way, or which conflicted with any of the four criteria above, were "suppressed" by the authorities - the term that appears on letters in the source files. Rule three about 'Public News' may reflect the assumption that it could provoke unrest or interfere with the aim of isolating convicts from society; acquiring this knowledge would undermine some of the pains of imprisonment. In consequence, convicts' historical understandings would be frozen at the point of their reception into the prison, and the prison could create its own history convict without any apparent consideration regarding its institutionalizing effect. Convicts required permission to retain, or even to destroy the letters they received.

News, as constructed by the convict and interpreted by the censor, was, however, not easily classified despite the apparent clarity of the four prescriptions. A letter from convict William Galbraith to his sister, for example, testifies to the limitations of the penal censorship: his letter conveys a Kafkaesque mood, describing a sense of personal hopelessness and neglect by the authorities in failing to respond to his needs and requests.⁸⁰ Gresham Sykes alludes to "a Kafka-like atmosphere" in what he terms a single system of total power.⁸¹

Table 1 below indicates that letters would have mattered in determining the quality of life for many convicts and their families. In English convict prisons families wrote letters to the Governor to seek more considered treatment for their sons; others, from inside, conveyed the trauma of isolation.⁸² Over the period 1889-1942 one thousand and eight hundred and fifteen letters were sent by thirty-one of the convicts whose files are now archived at the Scottish National Record Office, and they received one thousand seven hundred and two letters, suggesting convicts' epistolary networks were stable (see Table 1). Only one convict, Archibald McMillan, aged thirty and convicted of culpable homicide in 1909 had no correspondence recorded. This epistolary reciprocity suggests attachments made by convicts with a limited number of people were, prior to imprisonment, strong, and the stigma of crime did not impede a continuation of bonds. Some historians argue that Scottish convicts were oppositional to their society, but the mutuality of convicts' letter exchange indicates intimate family networks despite any disruption attendant on their criminality.⁸³

Table 1 represents the exchange pattern of letters recorded in twelve of the convict files. These Letters, sent and received, are typical of the other records. The magnitude of letter exchange is written by the guards on each convict's prison file recording sheets; only a limited proportion of the actual letters survive.

TABLE 1: Letter exchange patterns 1889-1942

Convict's name	Number of Letters <i>sent</i> by convict and period		Number of letters <i>received</i> by convict and period	
William Galbraith	30	1897-1912	30	1897-1912
George McCudden	117	1932-1942	99	1932-1942
Thomas Allan	119	1911-1928	115	1911-1928
William Lambie	63	1919-1931	37	1919-1931
James Tinsley	7	1915-1916	5	1915-1916
Oscar Slater	114	1909-1927	111	1909-1928
Lewis Klink	219	1905-1921	141	1905-1917
Thomas Bone	212	1908-1912	335	1908-1912
James Ritchie	69	1907-1922	57	1907-1922
Michael Callaghan	11	1918-1920	8	1918-1920
John Watson Lawrie	32	1889-1900	23	1889-1900
Joseph Calabrese	8	1905-1910	8	1905-1910
Robert Wilcox	108	1930-1942	76	1930-1942
James Reid	89	1929-1938	69	1929-1938
Peter Queen	133	1931-1942	121	1931-1942
Andrew Cameron	107	1934-1942	102	1934-1942

Some letters indicate the writer uses them to make sense of their past and psychic states. One of William Galbraith's letters, for example, written in 1909, twelve years into his sentence when he was aged thirty, is replete with pain and struggle. An indifferent status quo forces him to acknowledge his subjugation and epistolary liberty meant William Galbraith's sister became cognizant of her brother's suffering, including suicidal ideation:

My Dear Sister,

It seems that through some little mistake on the part of the officials here I have not been able to keep your last letter, of course I got a read of it and was glad to see you sent mine onto Fanny. I hope she has answered it by ere now so that you may send it me along with your own. My health is still in a state of increasing prostration so that now I am positively watched and would rather be dead. I wrote this to Secretary of Scotland giving particulars as to the state of my health and the circumstances for that. Of course I expected that he would look into my complaint and take such steps as would be necessary to meet the necessities of my case by least having me examined by the commission Dr. Now his reply to me was that he could not find grounds to interfere. Our own Dr keeps telling me that to worry and brooding over my sentence that's the cause of my trouble, but this is not so for I never had any time for either brooding or thinking about my sentence and its rather aggravating to be told my trouble is mental when it is not. I think I told you Mary some years ago that I was working at the blacksmithing with a view to supporting my dear ones by that trade when I got out of this. Now I am rendered useless for that trade and have given up hopes of even seeing these Darlings again for time is running out and so is my disease yet little or no efforts are put forward to check the rate at which the disease is coming upon me. I wonder why Mr MacLardy has not written me ere now. You remember he promised to petition for me again. You might find out before you answer this. I am 12.5 years in December. That is more than some men have done who was actually sentenced to death for wilful murder.

Your loving brother William Galbraith XXXXXXXXX

William's mind is lively and analytical, despite his disappointments and failing health, retaining a vibrant social union with his family outside.

Letters from prisoners to home serve a range of purposes: requests for practical support, reflections on values, accounts of desperate conditions, fear and trauma, critiques of criminal justice, requests for and comments upon family news, apologies and farewells. Some families distanced themselves from prisoner relatives, ceasing to communicate altogether. Roper's study of correspondence in a different context explores the ties between sons in the trenches and their mothers during World War One, uncovering a caring, vulnerable and emotionally expressive masculinity.⁸⁴ Roper describes the letter as a "uniquely tangible sign of the loved one".

Eleven years into penal servitude Robert Smith carefully penned his thoughts from his solitary cell in 1904. Emotions stimulated during solitude, and activated by a thunder storm wrenched unconscious entanglements from his brain of "some twenty years ago," emotions that were unresolved even before he went into custody.⁸⁵ Robert Smith's letter seems to have been intended to remind his unresponsive partner of the identity of the man she once loved and his

loyalty to her. He has heard nothing from his wife in six years, but only now is he attempting to pursue the truth of allegations he received three years ago, that his wife may “have gone wrong”.

Dear Wife,

I take the pleasure of writing you this few lines hopping *[sic]* that this will find you and all the Children all well and I hope that James and George are doing well and that they are helping you all that they can and that they are all ways *[sic]* kind to you and that they never make you sorry and Dear wife I was sitting dreamin a fortnight ago and it came on a thunder storm and that brought to my mind of you some twenty years ago and as I was holding this thought there came to my mind of a letter that came to me over three years ago and that the person that wrote it to me had some thing *[sic]* to tell me but I wrote and told him he could tell me nothing that I care for but as I have been thinking on all this I have come to think that some of you have gone wrong but as I do not know whither *[sic]* it is you or the Children so my dear wife will you be as good as to let me know the truth and all about it I can say that I will say no thing *[sic]* to you on the subject but I will do all that I can to make you happy and I did not think that ever I would have to write on this subject but let me know how ever bad for you know that I am a sinner and I would be very glad if you would be as kind as to write this next week if convenience as I will expect you to answer this so my Dear wife you told me the last letter that I got over six years ago that you had very little news to tell me and now as you should have done by this time would you try to mind on Montrose so I think I will have to stop this time so no more at the present

Remains, yours of twenty years ago R. Smith

P.S Dear wife I have not said all that I have a mind to say but don't think that I am angry *[sic]* but very sorry for all thar *[sic]* people did for you and me R.S.

The composition of a letter can symbolize a desperate desire to rekindle the past and clarify emotions and relationships. Elizabeth Foyster found that family, friendship and community ties “were often strengthened by imprisonment”⁸⁶ Many of the Peterhead files indicate a different outcome. Thomas Bone, for example, a miner born in the south-west of Scotland, sent two-hundred and eleven letters, and received a similar number, and yet four years into his life sentence he committed suicide in November 1912. Roper demonstrated that family intimacies are sustaining resources, but, on the other hand, reminders of intimate ties would rekindle the trauma of separation.⁸⁷

Rogers recognized that social dynamics within prison were subject to close private surveillance, but outside letter correspondence “lacked its recent association with privacy. Commonly letters were circulated to readers other than the recipient and read aloud among groups of family and friends.”⁸⁸ Convicts’ letters may therefore have been constructed through a framework of social scripts that facilitated news-sharing family occasions, and in this vein convicts were supported by communities of kith and kin, with whom they shared the sentiments and the discursive terms of expression from which their letters were composed. That sending and receiving letters were privileges, not rights, afforded further power to the penal authorities to control, manage and punish convicts. Evangelical reformers sought the moral reform of the criminal through self-examination engendered by isolation and minimal support. Utilitarians, on the other hand, perceived reform in terms of developing “industrial citizens habituated to honest labour”.

Peterhead satisfied each type of reforming spirit; convicts worked the granite by day and at night inhabited solitary cells. The formulation of a mood of gloom was a deliberate penal strategy to induce introspection and critical self-examination, and gloom and vulnerability are apparent in the convicts' letters. Out of that suffocating internal world, drivers would emerge sufficient to break the convict's will-power to resist.

This import and export of news is a feature of data collected during the Depression Years of the 1930s in America by Donald Clemmer in his sociological study of the social organization of a prison community. He argued "the unseen environment of the prisoner's world" is constant from how it existed twenty years earlier in the US "under a routine and a regime little different from the old bastille institutions".⁸⁹ The prisoners' world of censored correspondence, as revealed through his attention to letters, indicates overlap with Peterhead's "total institution". In Peterhead the requirement to formulate their needs within a tightly codified simplistic format through requests would further tend to diminish oppositional behaviour.

CONVICTS' REQUESTS: SUBMISSION AND DEFERENCE

'Requests' constitute a tradition of codified prisoner communication, typically within the prison to the guards, offering convicts a small amount of self-expression, agency, hope and an opportunity to be heard, while also reminding them of the pains of imprisonment. Understood as a mode of punishment, they remind convicts of their status, but they were a practical way in which convicts could attempt to improve their daily lives. A Dartmoor convict, for example, found that "library books are the convicts greatest blessing" especially, he argued, as a resource to pass the time, otherwise "the days drag on".⁹⁰

During the period 1890-1938 a total of 1,325 requests were recorded on "Request Sheets" and retained in the thirty-two Peterhead convict files now held by the National Records of Scotland (Figure 2). An approved decision had to be ratified by higher penal authorities, leaving convicts waiting for days for a decision. Typical Requests include: Write to Secretary of Scotland; Write to Prison Commission; Interview Visiting Committee; Wants to know if he'll be kept after 20 years; Petition Secretary for Scotland; to see Chaplain letter; Letter in lieu of visit; To write to Italian Council, Glasgow; Translation of letter sent out by convict; To not go to Quarry for a few weeks; Change of Party; Report by D. Dunlop on convict's medical condition; To complain about library books being withdrawn; Due convict letter from wife - wishes office to inform her; Wants Special letter.

Emile Durkheim argued that the act of punishment symbolizes that the authorities are in control and that social conventions will be enforced. Interpreted in this light, requests are penal rituals through which power and authority are imposed. The request represents a system of authority associated with principles of "less eligibility". According to government policy the penal system

adopts regimes “that are markedly more unpleasant than the conditions of life experienced by the lowest strata living in “free society”; the effectiveness of the penal sanction is therefore dependent upon conditions outside in the labour market. ⁹¹ Requests are arguably constitutive of social conditions meeting that eligibility doctrine. Psychologically, requests function to remind convicts of their dependency on the custodial authorities. Alternative semantics for the word “requests” offered in Roget’s Thesaurus include supplication, begging, plea and beseeching. ⁹² Each alternative embraces a part of the penal dynamic of convicts’ requests. Convicts, through demonstrating their submission, earned the right to be treated as human beings in this nonconformist, ascetic, moral regime.

Figure 2: Convict’s Request sheet

DATE	REQUEST	REPORTS AND DECISION
1897 April 23	Wants letter to which he is entitled on conviction	yes AMF
Dec 20	Blacksmith's wife	Is in Stan. class - must apply to Chief. In class to write in a Party. I am not of Stan. class
Mar 23	Wants to be taught a trade	For to see what can be done
1898 Jan 19	Slate	yes due 12.10.
July 13	To write his sister next time he is in the cell	yes - no objection
1899 Oct 14	Wants provider in his cell - Consider the tea breakfast too small.	yes - may have provider
Oct 21	Wants tea breakfast again	yes
1900 Jan 21	Wants to be employed at some trade - Blacksmith or some other trade (not laboring)	Not yet - Has been in as Blacksmith (with some other Party) no vacancy at present inside Prison - Will be known

John Watson Laurie submitted ninety-one requests, including “A slate”, “Complains regarding his punishment”, “States that a warder used improper language to him”, “Educational book (geography)”, “Wants chain returned”, “Asking permission to write a special letter to his father”, “Write to prison Commission asking to be allowed to return to his former party (Carpenters)”, “Wants to know if he will be kept after 20 years”, “To be allowed 2 library books”, “To write a letter”. He seems to have been striving for self-improvement, and presumably distracting himself from monotony. His request to know about the duration of his sentence indicates a cumulative

anxiety - such requests symbolize the uncertainty convicts experienced, faced with remote and unresponsive authorities.

William Dick submitted requests to the Secretary for Scotland and the Prison Commission to be permitted to correspond with his wife. Family contact not a right, nor was the prison under a duty to grant it. Robert Halliday, during a three-year period of his sentence, made thirty-five requests, including: "To see his agent", "To hand clothes to his mother". Some requests asked for a reduction in his tariff, and to be in touch with his family. William Galbraith had been a labourer before imprisonment and his requests included: "wants tea breakfast again", "wants to be taught a trade", "to get a book on basket making", "bread and butter for Class breakfast". Requests about learning a trade reveal agency, orientation to the future, and resonate with Victorian values of self-help. That this convict he had to request his right to a better diet ("Class breakfast") suggests the authorities did not invariably respect differential privileges for convicts.

George Aitkin's requests document his desire for self-improvement - "To learn cutting in Tailor's Shop", family affection - "Wants photo in his cell of his little boy", religiosity - "Bible Class" and social communication - "Letter in lieu of visit".⁹³ James Tinsley's Requests also illustrate the importance of religion and family in the lives of some of these convicts. He asked "To join Church of England choir", "To be allowed a letter in lieu for a visit", and "To attend Bible class". James McMillan asked "To put photo in cell" and submitted petitions to the authorities to be transferred to Edinburgh to be closer to family.⁹⁴ Joseph Calabrese's requests between 1905 and 1912 included for transfer to Italy, to "Write to his brother", and for a "Shoemaker and tailor", suggestive of concern with respectability and appearance.⁹⁵ Robert Swift Wilcox requested: "Change of labour from Taylor shop", "Petition S of S", "Exercise book for general purpose of making notes", "To be allowed football for recreation on Wed. evenings", "To be allowed chess sent from home".⁹⁶ William Lamb's Requests were less ambitious: "Asks artificial teeth", "Assistance to write letter", "Wants special boots".⁹⁷

These Requests denote the vibrant agency of the convicts who were constantly seeking to adjust to the pains of their incarceration. Archibald Robertson made a mere eight Requests between 1893-1910, including "Letter", "To join bible class" and "Petition".⁹⁸ Peter Queen's Requests included: "To dine in his cell", "To have visits from father on 23rd", "To send a greetings telegram", "To have a change of labour".⁹⁹ George McCudden requested "To get to music class", "To have visit from sister in March", "Dictionary".¹⁰⁰ Andrew Alison Cameron requested a "Change of labour to quarry", "Permission to have books on football from property" and a "Permit for visit by step-father".¹⁰¹

The vibrant agency of the convicts, constantly seeking to adjust to the pains of their incarceration, is everywhere apparent in these lists of varied and informative Requests, highly poignant reminders of their humanity, their struggle to retain social ties, educate themselves and exercise

some autonomy over daily rituals of dress and meals. The Requests convey a rudimentary history 'from below'. Kafka's *The Trial*, composed in 1914, explored modernity conceptualized as crushing bureaucracy from which there is no escape for alienated and powerless individuals whose lives are in a state of permanent arrest. Some of the convicts' letters and requests convey a sense that their experience was similar; more surprising is the number that imply resilience, and a determination to create a cultural life to help them to endure.

CONCLUSION

Commenting about penal servitude Philip Priestly argued that "the high hopes of the early prison reformers were shipwrecked on the obdurate realities of a human nature that proved incapable of bearing the religious and moral burdens of their visionary schemes".¹⁰² The convict experience at Peterhead was designed to guarantee that no convict escaped; it was thoroughly punitive, seeking, in Foucault's terms, to produce "docile bodies". Visionary psychology informed a legitimization for their treatment, including the way this penal regime regulated daily existence and limited free expression. The religious and moral burdens attaching to this penal order, however, may not have served quite the function that Priestly assigns to them: although in this historical period a heavy investment was made in a Calvinist re-modelling of the self through unrelenting physical labour in conditions of ascetic solitude, the function of those burdens may have been to reassure adherents to the existing social order, including reforming spirits, that imposing pains of imprisonment was justified, and assuage any guilt that may otherwise have afflicted their moral and social wellbeing. Recourse to moral and religious doctrines pertaining to the rescue of the lost souls that convicts represented, allowed them to overlook the sources of crime in the blatant class-related circumstances of severe urban deprivation. In this way, the convicts are othered by the establishment, whose enlightenment was confined by visionary schemes.

The convict's letters and requests gave scope to limited agency. Letters, on the one hand, helped mitigate the degree to which the convicts felt banished from society and their loved ones. They demonstrate a caring and emotional humanity. On the other hand, they could not express critical comment about their convict existence or wider social or political realities, so the letters give a partial insight to penal life, to the recipient and to the historian. Nevertheless, the quantity of reciprocated correspondence suggests convicts found meaning and gained relief through sharing news, concerns and in this way belonging to a community outside of the convict settlement.

Not every convict survived their incarceration intact despite the benefits of this commune with the outside. One Peterhead convict, learning that the release he was anticipating had been denied, committed suicide by cutting himself with a stolen knife and then immersing himself in a prison water tank. Others lost their sanity and were transferred permanently to Perth Prison's

Lunatic Department; once there their correspondence ceased. Stultification of their personhood extended to the regime of convicts' requests, the content of which indicate a bare minimum of choice and controlled autonomy. John Irwin remarks that "Certain significant physical characteristics and management processes of jails reflect the fact they are intended to hold only the rabble".¹⁰³ In the late nineteenth century criminals were still regarded as a degenerate underclass and there was anxiety expressed about them 'breeding' in large numbers in their urban squalor; the convict prison undertook an interventionalist function that overlapped with the asylum and labour colonies, where a supposed disorganized underclass was subjected to an enforced social re-engineering.

The files of the thirty-two convicts indicate the co-existence of forms of calibrated violence and mental dominance; each appears designed to ensure the pains of imprisonment are fully experienced. Hard labour was intended not only to be publicly useful, but to also inculcate moral and social values. Peterhead's reputation as a prison for the secure custody of violent criminals remained constant into the late twentieth century. It was iconic for violence during the period of the Glasgow gangster, enforcer and convicted murder Jimmy Boyle's solitary confinement in a small cage during the early 1970s. In 1987 the SAS elite UK special forces were called in by the British Home secretary to quell a riot and resolve the hostage-taking of a prison officer. Life in this forgotten Scottish gulag suggests continuity from its inception as Scotland's convict colony in 1888 right up until the decades preceding its final closure in 2013.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the National Records of Scotland for permission to use its archives, including the images reproduced by the author, and the archivists and others associated with the Historical Research Room: without their collective support this research would not have materialized; and I'm most grateful to historians Dr. Elizabeth Foyster, Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, and Professor Graeme Morton, University of Dundee, for their comments on a draft of this paper, and encouragement. Anonymous reviewer commentary was also supportive. The image of the convicts at work was purchased from Aberdeen Journals Ltd for use in a research publication.

REFERENCES

¹ Convict's description of his life in letter to family.

² H. Johnston, *Prison Histories, 1770s – 1950s* in Eds. B. Crewe, Y. Jewkes, and J. Bennett, *Handbook on Prisons*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016) pp. 24-38.

-
- ³ N. Whitty, Human rights as risk: UK prisons and the management of risk and rights, *Punishment and Society*, 13 (2): 123-148.
- ⁴ B. Godfrey and P. Lawrence, *Crime and Justice 1750-1950* (Oxon, 2005).
- ⁵ A. Brown, Interwar Penal Policy and Crime: The Dartmoor Convict Prison Riot 1932. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- ⁶ Five Years of Penal Servitude by One Who Has Endured It. (London: R. Bentley, 1878).
- ⁷ E. Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1985*. (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1987).
- ⁸ Annual Reports of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland, 1879-1929, London, HMSO.
- ⁹ D. Meredith, Full Circle? Contemporary Views on Transportation, in Ed. S. Nicolas, *Convict Workers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 23.
- ¹⁰ Parliamentary Papers, 1858: 177 cited in J. Cameron, *Prisons and Punishment in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1983).
- ¹¹ S. Nicholas and P.R. Shergold, Unshackling the Past, in Ed. S. Nicholas, *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 11.
- ¹² D. Smith, "Colonel A.B. McHardy: The Transformation of Penalty in Scotland, 1885-1909", *Scottish Economic and Social History*, (1989), 38-54.
- ¹³ NRS: HH15/16 Letter by Prison Commission for Scotland to Governor of Peterhead, 7/1/1920.
- ¹⁴ NRS, HH15/21.
- ¹⁵ R.P. Dobash, Labour and Discipline in Scottish and English Prisons: Moral Correction, Punishment and Useful Toil, *Sociology*, 1983, 17, 1, pp. 1-27.
- ¹⁶ J. Simon, Poor Discipline: Parole and the Social Control of the Underclass, 1890-1900. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) p.42.
- ¹⁷ Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 38-54.
- ¹⁸ J. Devon, *The Criminal and the Community*. (Toronto: Bell and Cockburn, 1912).
- ¹⁹ Her Majesty's Prisons: Their Effects and Defects by One Who Has Tried Them. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1881).

²⁰ P. Priestley, *Jail Journeys: The English prison experience since 1918*. (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 7.

²¹ M. Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 212.

²² Pick, D., *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder c. 1848-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

²³ M. Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

²⁴ T. Griffiths, Work, Leisure and Time in the Nineteenth Century, in T. Griffiths and G. Morton (Eds), *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1800-1900*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 171.

²⁵ W.W. Knox and A. McKinlay, Crime, Protest and Policing, in T. Griffiths and G. Morton (Eds), *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1800-1900*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 196-224.

²⁶ A. Beveridge, Life in the Asylum: patients' letters from Morningside, 1873-1908, *History of Psychiatry*, ix, 1998, pp. 431-469.

²⁷ A. Coyle, *Inside: Rethinking Scotland's Prisons* (Edinburgh, Scottish Child, 1991).

²⁸ Annual Reports of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland, 1879-1929 (London, HMSO).

²⁹ A. Spencer, *Rethinking Imprisonment in Scotland* (Scottish Prison Commission, 2007).

³⁰ G. Sykes, *The Society of Captives* (Princeton, 1958).

³¹ N. Morris, *Maconochie's Gentleman: The Story of Norfolk Island and the Roots of the Modern Prison* (Oxford, 2002).

³² Riggs, Prosecutors.

³³ H. Johnston, Prison Histories, 1770s – 1950s in Eds. B. Crewe, Y. Jewkes, and J. Bennett, *Handbook on Prisons*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016) pp. 24-38.

³⁴ T. Griffiths, Work, Leisure and Time in the Nineteenth Century, in Griffiths, T. and Morton, G. (Eds) *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1800-1900*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010, 170-195.

³⁵ C. Soares, 'The Path to Reform?' *Cultural and Social History*, 12 (3) (2015), 411-429.

³⁶ A.G. Coyle, *The Organizational Development of the Scottish Prison Service with Particular Reference to the Role and Influence of the Prison Officer*, PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1986, p. 58.

³⁷ J. Cameron, *Prisons and Punishment in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1983).

³⁸ *Five Years of Penal Servitude by One Who Has Endured It.* (London: R. Bentley, 1878).

³⁹ J. MacLean, John MacLean: Life in Prison, *The Red Dawn*, Vol. 1 (1), 1919, p.8-9.

⁴⁰ D. Wilson, *Pain and Retribution: A Short History of British Prisons, 1066 to the Present.* (London, 2014).

⁴¹ J. Devon, *The Criminal and the Community* (London: John Lane Company, 1911), p. 6.

⁴² *Her Majesty's Prisons: Their Effects and Defects by One Who Has Tried Them.* London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington. 1881, p. 141.

⁴³ *Prisons (Scotland)* (Hansard, 6th July, 1915) Vol. 73, cc. 194-5.

⁴⁴ M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London, 1977).

⁴⁵ J.J. Tobias, *Crime and Industrial Society in the 19th century* (London, 1967).

⁴⁶ R. P. Dobash, "Labour and Discipline in Scottish and English Prisons: Moral Correction, Punishment and Useful Toil", *Sociology*, Vol. 17 (1), 1-27.

⁴⁷ T. Kevorkian, 'The Rise of the Poor, Weak and Wicked: Poor Care, Punishment, Religion and Patriarchy in Leipzig, c1700-1730', *Journal of Social History*, 2000, 34 (1) 163-181.

⁴⁸ C. Soares, 2015.

⁴⁹ M. Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850.* New York, Pantheon Books, 1978, p. 145-146.

⁵⁰ R. Johnston, 'Charity That Heals': The Scottish Labour Colony Association and Attitudes to the Able-Bodied Unemployed in Glasgow, 1890-1914, *The Scottish Historical Review*, (1998), Vol. 77, No. 203, 77-95.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² G. Rusche, "Labour Market and Penal Sanction: Thoughts on the Sociology of Punishment", in *Punishment and Penal Discipline*, (eds) T. Platt and P. Takagi, 63-73.

⁵³ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ NRS, HH34. Sentenced 1893 for culpable homicide and died in Montrose Royal Asylum 1937.

⁵⁶ R. P. Dobash, "Labour and Discipline in Scottish and English Prisons: Moral Correction, Punishment and Useful Toil", *Sociology*, Vol. 17 (1), 1-27.

⁵⁷ Foucault, 1977.

⁵⁸ Dobash, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Five Years of Penal Servitude by One Who Has Endured It. (London: R. Bentley, 1878).

⁶⁰ J. Devon, *The Criminal & The Community*, p. 255.

⁶¹ J. Cameron, *Prisons and Punishment in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1983).

⁶² S. McConville, The Victorian Prison, in Eds: N. Morris and D.J. Rothman, *The Oxford History of The Prison*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 198, p. 123.

⁶³ NRS, HH15/1: John Watson Lawrie was a rivet-maker by trade. He had attempted suicide immediately before his apprehension, following the death of a male companion as they were hill-walking on the Isle of Arran.

⁶⁴ NRS, HH15/15: certified as fit for any kind of hard labour. The Army Council remitted his sentence in 1920.

⁶⁵ NRS, HH15/9.

⁶⁶ NRS, HH15/10.

⁶⁷ NRS, HH15/16.

⁶⁸ NRS, HH15/22.

⁶⁹ NRS, HH15/8.

⁷⁰ A. Beveridge, Life in the Asylum: patient's letters from Morningside, 1873-1908. *History of Psychiatry*, ix, 1998: 431-469, p. 434.

⁷¹ NRS, HH16/106, Convict No. 17295/1.

⁷² S. Nicholas and P. R. Shergold, *Convicts as Workers*, in Ed. S. Nicholas, *Convict Workers* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 75.

⁷³ M. Dobson, *Letters*, in M. Dobson and B. Ziemann, (eds) *Reading Primary Sources: The interpretation of texts from nineteenth and twentieth-century history* (Oxon, 2009), 57-74.

⁷⁴ G. Morton, *Ourselves and Others: Scotland 1832-1914* (Edinburgh, 2012).

⁷⁵ I. Donnachie, "Scottish Criminals and Transportation to Australia 1786-1852", *Scottish Economic and Social History*, May, (1984) 21-38.

⁷⁶ G. Morton, *Ourselves and Others: Scotland 1832-1914* (Edinburgh, 2012), p. 257.

⁷⁷ M. Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1978, p. 69.

⁷⁸ *Five Years of Penal Servitude by One Who Has Endured It*. London: R. Bentley, 1878.

⁷⁹ J-C. Farcy, *Prisoners' requests to be sent into exile*, written in the 1870s, *Varia*, Vol. 2, 2005.

⁸⁰ NRS, HH15/21.

⁸¹ G. Sykes, *The Society of Captives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 7.

⁸² *Her Majesty's Prisons: Their Effects and Defects by One Who Has Tried Them*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington. 1881, pp. 186-194.

⁸³ T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (London, 1969), p. 392.

⁸⁴ M. Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War*, (Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁸⁵ NRS, HH15/34.

⁸⁶ E. Foyster, "Prisoners Writing Home: The Function of Their Letters c. 1680-1800", *Journal of Social History*, 47 (4) (2014) 943-967.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ H. Rogers, "The Way to Jerusalem: Reading, Writing and Reform in an Early Victorian Gaol", *Past and Present*, No. 205, 2009, 71-104.

⁸⁹ D. Clemmer, *The Prison Community* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1958), p. xii.

⁹⁰ Five Years of Penal Servitude by One Who Has Endured It. London: R. Bentley, 1878, p. 214.

⁹¹ D. Garland, Sociological Perspectives on Punishment, *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 14, 1991, 115-165, p. 129.

⁹² R. Thesaurus (Bucks, 1971).

⁹³ NRS, HH15/2.

⁹⁴ NRS, HH15/9.

⁹⁵ NRS, HH15/3.

⁹⁶ NRS, HH15/31

⁹⁷ NRS, HH15/26.

⁹⁸ NRS, HH15/5.

⁹⁹ NRS, HH15/30.

¹⁰⁰ NRS, HH15/33.

¹⁰¹ NRS, HH15/32.

¹⁰² P. Priestly, *Jail Journeys: The English Prison Experience, 1918-1990* (London: Routledge), p. 9.

¹⁰³ J. Irwin, *Jail: Managing The Underclass in American Society* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 43.